

Kyodan

News Letter

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KYODAN-RELATED MISSIONARIES MEET IN TOZANSO

Missionaries related to the Kyodan and working in direct Kyodan assignments or in schools and social work held their annual conference March 31-April 2 at Tozanso, Gotemba. The meeting has been held annually since 1949 under the sponsorship of the Interboard Committee for Christian Work in Japan. The theme of the 1970 conference was "Power for Purpose."

The conference this year, taking advantage of the spaciousness of the Tozanso facilities, was planned as a family conference, and 122 children attended, along with 266 adults. While the majority of the participants were IBC Kyodan-related missionaries, German Kyodan-related missionaries, Kyodan staff members, and overseas guests also attended.

Rather than dealing directly with either "power" or "purpose," the Conference was designed to provide "power for purpose" through music, drama, lectures, worship, and discussion. It opened with two American plays presented by the Canadian Academy Players, portraying the jumbled communication typical of today's impersonal, TV-dominated life, with more authentic communication sought in small-group discussions that took place around the plays. In impromptu jazz and song sessions, and formal worship, music was drawn on as a source of power.

Several sections of the program focussed on the American situation: a panel on "The American Church Today," a film depicting the struggle of a New England pastor who chose the status of conscientious objector, and a talk on Japan-U.S. relations by Sen Nishiyama, an interpreter well-known in Japanese-American circles. Fireside groups discussed Japan-America relations, race relations (primarily in the context of the U.S.), structures for inter-church cooperation, social action and evangelism, and the generation gap.

Too U.S.-Oriented?

The heavy American flavor of the conference led a German visitor to comment that it resembled "an American festival," concerns tending to center on fellowship and issues that were North America-oriented rather than oriented to the Japanese situation.

In the Kyodan hour Wednesday morning, Kyodan Secretary Tomomi Kimura and Secretary of Missionary Personnel and Ecumenical Ministries George Hanabusa referred explicitly to Kyodan expectations with regard to missionaries. Kimura encouraged missionaries to speak their minds, emphasizing that the Japanese church needs their creativity.

Hanabusa gave the background of the Kyodan's decision last year to request no new evangelistic missionaries for two years and stressed that this should be understood as positive, not negative, inasmuch as it shows the Kyodan's desire to establish ways of requesting, accepting, assigning, and supervising missionaries that will make utmost use of their calling and talents.

Short-term missionaries present asked for, and received, conference backing for their request that they be included in decision-making processes, stating that their short-term status and experiences enable them to make special contributions.

In the closing service of communion, Hanabusa called for a new understanding of the meaning of "to the ends of the earth" as applying to those "ends" in the life of each person, each nation, and each society that stand in need of redemption. "There is no place for a superior-culture complex in mission today," he said.

Discussions during and following the conference revealed the persistence of questions about a conference of this type: "Should Japanese pastors and co-workers be included?" "Should the purpose be fellowship or study of important issues?" "Should the content be more closely related to the missionary's work in Japan?" However, the conference accepted a study committee's recommendation that the present conference pattern be continued. The 1971 conference planning committee will, for the first time, include the Kyodan Secretary of Missionary Personnel and a representative from the IBC Field Secretary's office.

NINE MISSIONARIES RECEIVE DIRECTOR OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION STATUS

For the first time in the history of the United Church of Christ in Japan, nine women missionaries who are engaged in the educational work of districts or local churches were made Directors of Christian Education at the twelfth meeting of the Standing Executive Committee, April 6, upon the recommendation of the Education Committee. The nine persons, their location and sending churches, are:

Miss Sue Althouse	Shikoku, Chuyo	United Presbyterian Church
Miss Virginia Deter	Chubu, Ishikawa	United Presbyterian Church
Miss Enid M. Horning	Tokyo, Chiba	United Church of Canada
Mrs. Kiyo Kamikawa	Kanto, Saitama	Disciples of Christ
Miss Jean B. Kellerman	Hokkai, Shintoku	United Church of Canada
	Church	
Miss M. Jean Macdonald	Tokyo, Nishi	United Church of Canada
Miss Mary E. Nettle	Hokkai, Dohoku	United Church of Canada
Mrs. Jitsuko Reedy	Tokyo, Seinan	United Methodist Church
Miss Marjorie Tunbridge	Tokai, Hokushin	United Church of Canada

In October of last year the examination requirement for the status of Director of Christian Education was revised. In accordance with the revision, a missionary sent from a Kyodan-related church, who has a master's degree in Christian education or who has been engaged for more than ten years in education work in a district or local church, can, upon the recommendation of the Executive Committee of the district to which he or she is assigned, be granted recognition as a D.C.E. of the Kyodan without examination.

The status of D.C.E. was introduced into the Kyodan seven years ago as a step toward utilizing the abilities of lay workers in carrying forward the educational work of the church in Japan. Since then most of the graduates of the Christian Education courses of Seiwa College for Christian Workers in Nishinomiya and the Department of Theology of Aoyama Gakuin in Tokyo have become D.C.E.'s. There are at present ninety-nine persons (including the nine missionaries) who are registered as D.C.E.'s. All except two of them are women.

Many of the Japanese women D.C.E.'s are young and eligible for marriage, and so they do not stay on their jobs long. Because the D.C.E. is still a new position in the Kyodan, they also have to face problems and difficulties arising out of the lack of understanding of their function and task on the part of most churches. In spite of this, however, most of them are doing good work in local churches, schools, and hospitals, promoting the educational work to which they have dedicated themselves. Some of them have married ministers and are now helping their husbands in the pastorate.

The missionary D.C.E. is sometimes able to do more in promoting the educational ministry of a local church or district since she has had good training and wide experience in this work. For example, she is expected to raise the level of work of the church school through training workers. She is also looked to as a leader in adult education, an acute need in the churches of the Kyodan. In view of these and other ways in which the missionary D.C.E. can contribute to the work of Japanese churches, it is felt that the D.C.E. status provides an opportunity and new way in which women can respond to their calling to work in the church in Japan.

SMALL RURAL CHURCH ESTABLISHES "YAMABATO GAKUEN"

On April 3, Yamabato Gakuen, a home for severely retarded children, opened in Haibara, Shizuoka Ken, the project of a small rural church with a total membership of fifty and an average Sunday morning attendance of fifteen.

The Home, which will accommodate thirty children, grew out of the Haibara Church members' awareness that in Japan there are 500,000 mentally retarded persons but institutional facilities for only 24,000. It also stems from their personal knowledge of the difficulties and problems persons with handicaps face.

Back of the small church's big undertaking--drawing up the prospectus, approaching government officials for approval and support, raising funds, supervising construction, and providing the core of the staff--is the pastor's and members' conviction that "service to the world" is the essential nature of the church.

Such an understanding of the church is familiar in the Haibara area from the days when Canadian Missionary May McLachlan conducted a day care center for children in the peak of the farming season. It has continued to be emphasized since Rev. Iwao Nagasawa, a graduate of the Department of Philosophy of Tokyo University and Tokyo Union Theological Seminary, became pastor of Haibara Church twelve years ago.

Nagasawa defines evangelism as "translating the Gospel into acts people can understand." He says he cannot believe that it is enough for him, as a pastor, to preach and offer salvation in spiritual terms only. He, and not only he but the whole congregation, must put their words and faith into action.

One of the Haibara Church laymen, Atsukuni Ooi, who was baptized by Miss McLachlan when he was 27 years old, left the electric power company he has worked for for twenty years last June to supervise the construction of the Home and become office manager. Discussing the move from financial security to a new venture with many unknowns, Hideko, his wife, said, "I was a little anxious about the move because I've become accustomed to the livelihood of a salary man. But in reality my husband's decision means our family life is fulfilled and expanded, and this is much greater security."

Ooi feels that because both he and his wife have handicaps--he having paralysis of the legs, she having a partial lung--they will not be outsiders but rather one with the residents.

A second church member, Michiko Miyazaki, veteran of twenty years of teaching, with experience in special education and music, has resigned her grade school teaching position to become principal. Also on the staff are six men and women in their early 20s, graduates in social work and education. Several are "products" of the KKS, the Haibara Church high school group; others are "seekers." The total staff is sixteen.

Plans for the Home have proceeded smoothly. City and prefectural governments welcomed the effort and contributed funds; the city gave a piece of land adjoining the new Tomei Highway. Haibara Church members contributed ¥5 million and through an appeal to churches throughout Japan had by March 31 reached the goal of ¥15.6 million (\$43,000).

Rev. Nagasawa had one low moment, when he was calling on homes in Haibara to explain the project and visited the home of the priest of Chokyoji, a local Buddhist temple. He found the grandmother enthusiastic about the opportunity the Home would offer her grandchild, but when Nagasawa met the child, he realized that, contrary to the grandmother's expectations, the girl, because her handicap is not a severe one, could not be admitted. But out of this experience came the realization that the Home could offer training in physical therapy for parents of retarded children, and such provisions have been made.

Nagasawa, whose sister is retarded, says that having a retarded person in the family can be a real blessing because of what family members learn from their relationships. "Yet we must not think it is enough to sympathize with them passively. We must take an active part with them in their struggle," he says.

DR. HINOHARA WAS ABOARD HIJACKED PLANE

Among the passengers aboard the Japan Air Lines plane, Yodo, hijacked to Korea on April 1, was Dr. Shigeaki Hinohara, chief of internal medicine at St. Luke's International Hospital, Tokyo. Dr. Hinohara was en route to Fukuoka to deliver a paper at a medical conference, having stayed up most of the previous night preparing it. Saturday, April 4, the doctor returned to Tokyo, having had three more sleepless nights and having missed the medical conference after all. In an article in the April 4 Asahi newspaper and in greetings to the congregation of Tamagawa Heian Church, Tokyo, of which he is a member, after the worship service on Sunday morning, Dr. Hinohara reported a few of his reactions.

One of his first concerns, he said, knowing, as a doctor, the amount of daily fluid intake the human body requires, was that the passengers might not be able to maintain their physical equilibrium on the slim ration of water doled out the first day. A second concern was the possibility that food poisoning would result from eating inadequately preserved food. Finally, he asked himself whether the emotional and physical stress among so large a group of passengers, most of whom were middle-aged, might not be conducive to heart failure. However, as it developed, there were, in spite of the long confinement, no serious physical effects.

"Like typical students," Dr. Hinohara observed, "the hijackers carried quantities of literature, which they offered to passengers to help them pass the time. Expecting a rather lengthy confinement, I chose Dostoyevski's Brothers Karamazov. There was a noticeable difference in the students' attitude toward the plane crew and toward the passengers. They were rather hostile toward the crew, while toward the passengers they were more or less friendly, although they did take the precaution of binding our hands.

"Being in a tense, explosive situation that could at any moment take a dangerous turn, we naturally were impelled to think through again our basic attitude toward life and death. Searching in my mind for scripture that would help me, I thought of the verse in John: 'Let not your heart be troubled....' and this was a strength to me."

